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keys. Other methods are also possible, such as a standard telephone call or face-to-face meeting. Keys may also be distributed automatically to CDs, using an imbedded PGP secret key into a communication device for SIP authentication.

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend Claims 1-11, 14, 18, 19, and 25 to read as follows:

Ino B1 A37

1. (Amended) In a communications system, a push-to-talk communication device to participate in a group communication net, said communications system including a controller to manage said group communication net and interface with said push-to-talk communication device, said device comprising:

a processor to convert information signals into packet data suitable for transmission over a distributed network;

a transmitter to transmit packet data through a first channel to said controller;

a receiver to receive packet data through a second channel from said controller; and

Cont.

a user-activated mechanism to activate said transmitter when a user of said communication device wishes to transmit said packet data to said controller.

2. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 1, wherein said communication device is a wireless communication device.

3. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 1, further comprising a memory unit to store said packet data until said controller is ready to receive said packet data.

4. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 3, wherein said memory unit is used to minimize perceived latency of a user.

5. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 1, wherein said communication device further comprises a dynamically configurable priority level, wherein said priority level determines whether said communication device has the authority to gain transmission privilege over another communication device such that said communication device may interrupt said another communication device having a lower priority level.

6. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 5, wherein said priority level is dynamically configurable.

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7. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 1, wherein said communication device receives information from said controller regarding said group communications net.

8. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 1, wherein said communication device operates in a secure mode.

9. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 1, wherein said communication device further comprises identification information, and wherein said communication device updates its identification information when its current identification information has or is about to change, and transmits its new identification information to said controller.

10. (Amended) The communication device of Claim 1, wherein said group communications net is capable of being in a dormant mode, and wherein activation of said user-activated mechanism prompts said controller to bring the group communications net out of said dormant mode.

Jw B2 Cont.

11. (Amended) In a communications system, an apparatus to adapt a communication device to participate in a group communication net, said communications system comprising at least two communication devices and having a controller to manage

said group communication net and interface with said communication devices, said apparatus comprising:

a first port to establish a first channel with said controller;

a processor electrically connected to said first port, wherein said processor is dynamically configurable to send packet data through said first channel to said controller; and

a user-activated mechanism to allow a user of said communication device to transmit said packet data to said controller.

14. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 11, further comprising a memory unit to store said packet data until said controller is ready to receive said packet data.

18. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 11, wherein said communication device further comprises a priority level, wherein said priority level determines whether said communication device has the authority to gain transmission privilege over another communication device such that said communication device may interrupt said another communication device having a lower priority level.

19. (Amended) The apparatus of Claim 18, wherein said priority level is dynamically configurable.

25. (Amended) In a communications system, a push-to-talk communication device to participate in a group communication net, said communications system including a controller to manage said group communication net and interface with said push-to-talk communication device, said device comprising:

a processor to convert information signals into packet data suitable for transmission over a distributed network, wherein said processor further comprises identification information, and wherein said processor updates its identification information when its current identification information has or is about to change, and transmits its new identification information to said controller;

a transmitter to transmit packet data through a first channel to said controller;

a receiver to receive packet data through a second channel from said controller; and

a user-activated mechanism to activate said transmitter when a user of said communication device wishes to transmit said packet data to said controller.

Please add new Claims 26-43 as follows:

26. (New) In a push-to-talk communication device, a method for participating in a group communication net, said method comprising:

receiving information from a user of said push-to-talk communication device who wishes to transmit to a controller;

converting said information into packet data suitable for transmission over a distributed network; and

transmitting said packet data to said controller.

27. (New) The method of Claim 26, further comprising:

storing said packet data until said controller is ready to receive said packet data.

28. (New) The method of Claim 26, further including:

determining whether said communication device has the authority to gain transmission privilege over another communication device such that said communication device may interrupt said another communication device having a lower priority level.

29. (New) The method of Claim 26, further including:

receiving information from said controller regarding said group communications net.

30. (New) The method of Claim 26, further including:

maintaining identification information for said communication device;

updating said identification information when said identification information has or is about to change; and

transmitting said updated identification information to said controller.

31. (New) The method of Claim 26, further including:

determining whether said group communications net is in a dormant mode; and

activating said controller to bring said group communications net out of said dormant mode.

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32. (New) In a push-to-talk communication device, computer-readable medium embodying a method for participating in a group communication net, said method comprising:

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receiving information from a user of said push-to-talk communication device who wishes to transmit to a controller;

converting said information into packet data suitable for transmission over a distributed network; and

transmitting said packet data to said controller.

33. (New) The computer-readable medium of Claim 32, wherein the method further includes:

storing said packet data until said controller is ready to receive said packet data.

34. (New) The computer-readable medium of Claim 32, wherein the method further includes:

determining whether said communication device has the authority to gain transmission privilege over another communication device such that said communication device may interrupt said another communication device having a lower priority level.

35. (New) The computer-readable medium of Claim 32, wherein the method further includes:

receiving information from said controller regarding said group communications net.

36. (New) The computer-readable medium of Claim 32, wherein the method further includes:

maintaining identification information for said communication device;

updating said identification information when said identification information has or is about to change; and

transmitting said updated identification information to said controller.

37. (New) The computer-readable medium of Claim 32, wherein the method further includes:

determining whether said group communications net is in a dormant mode; and

activatiing said controller to bring said group communications net out of said dormant mode.

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38. (New) A communication device for participating in a group communication net, comprising:

means for receiving information from a user of said push-to-talk communication device who wishes to transmit to a controller;

means for converting said information into packet data suitable for transmission over a distributed network; and

means for transmitting said packet data to said controller.

39. (New) The communication device of Claim 38, further comprising:

means for storing said packet data until said controller is ready to receive said packet data.

40. (New) The communication device of Claim 38, further including:

means for determining whether said communication device has the authority to gain transmission privilege over another communication device such that said communication device may interrupt said another communication device having a lower priority level.

41. (New) The communication device of Claim 38, further including:

means for receiving information from said controller regarding said group communications net.

42. (New) The communication device of Claim 38, further including:

means for maintaining identification information for said communication device;

means for updating said identification information when said identification information has or is about to change; and

means for transmitting said updated identification information to said controller.

43. (New) The communication device of Claim 38, further including:

means for determining whether said group communications net is in a dormant mode; and

means for activating said controller to bring said group communications net out of said dormant mode.